

Exemplars of Reading Text Complexity, Quality, and Range & Sample Performance Tasks Related to Core Standards

Selecting Text Exemplars

The following text samples primarily serve to exemplify the level of complexity and quality that the Standards require all students in a given grade band to engage with. Additionally, they are suggestive of the breadth of texts that students should encounter in the text types required by the Standards. The choices should serve as useful guideposts in helping educators select texts of similar complexity, quality, and range for their own classrooms. They expressly do not represent a partial or complete reading list.

The process of text selection was guided by the following criteria:

- **Complexity.** Appendix A describes in detail a three-part model of measuring text complexity based on qualitative and quantitative indices of inherent text difficulty balanced with educators' professional judgment in matching readers and texts in light of particular tasks. In selecting texts to serve as exemplars, the work group began by soliciting contributions from teachers, educational leaders, and researchers who have experience working with students in the grades for which the texts have been selected. These contributors were asked to recommend texts that they or their colleagues have used successfully with students in a given grade band. The work group made final selections based in part on whether qualitative and quantitative measures indicated that the recommended texts were of sufficient complexity for the grade band. For those types of texts—particularly poetry and multimedia sources—for which these measures are not as well suited, professional judgment necessarily played a greater role in selection.
- **Quality.** While it is possible to have high-complexity texts of low inherent quality, the work group solicited only texts of recognized value. From the pool of submissions gathered from outside contributors, the work group selected classic or historically significant texts as well as contemporary works of comparable literary merit, cultural significance, and rich content.
- **Range.** After identifying texts of appropriate complexity and quality, the work group applied other criteria to ensure that the samples presented in each band represented as broad a range of sufficiently complex, high-quality texts as possible. Among the factors considered were initial publication date, authorship, and subject matter.

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When excerpts appear, they serve only as stand-ins for the full text. The Standards require that students engage with appropriately complex literary and informational works; such complexity is best found in whole texts rather than passages from such texts.

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Sample Performance Tasks

The text exemplars are supplemented by brief performance tasks that further clarify the meaning of the Standards. These sample tasks illustrate specifically the application of the Standards to texts of sufficient complexity, quality, and range. Relevant Reading standards are noted in brackets following each task, and the words in italics in the task reflect the wording of the Reading standard itself. (Individual grade-specific Reading standards are identified by their strand, grade, and number, so that RI.4.3, for example, stands for Reading, Informational Text, grade 4, standard 3.)

How to Read This Document

The materials that follow are divided into text complexity grade bands as defined by the Standards: K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, and 11-CCR. Each band's exemplars are divided into text types matching those required in the Standards for a given grade. K-5 exemplars are separated into stories, poetry, and informational texts (as well as read-aloud texts in kindergarten through grade 3). The 6-CCR exemplars are divided into English language arts (ELA), history/social studies, and science, mathematics, and technical subjects, with the ELA texts further subdivided into stories, drama, poetry, and informational texts. (The history/social studies texts also include some arts-related texts.) Citations introduce each excerpt, and additional citations are included for texts not excerpted in the appendix. Within each grade band and after each text type, sample performance tasks are included for select texts.

Media Texts

Selected excerpts are accompanied by annotated links to related media texts freely available online at the time of the publication of this document.

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K–1 Text Exemplars

Stories

Minarik, Else Holmelund. *Little Bear*. Illustrated by Maurice Sendak. New York: HarperCollins, 1957. (1957)
From “Birthday Soup”

“Mother Bear, Mother Bear, Where are you?” calls Little Bear.

“Oh, dear, Mother Bear is not here, and today is my birthday.

“I think my friends will come, but I do not see a birthday cake. My goodness – no birthday cake. What can I do?

The pot is by the fire. The water in the pot is hot. If I put something in the water, I can make Birthday Soup. All my friends like soup.

Let me see what we have. We have carrots and potatoes, peas and tomatoes; I can make soup with carrots, potatoes, peas and tomatoes.”

So Little Bear begins to make soup in the big black pot. First, Hen comes in. “Happy Birthday, Little Bear,” she says. “Thank you, Hen,” says Little Bear.

Hen says, “My! Something smells good here. Is it in the big black pot?”

“Yes,” says Little Bear, “I am making Birthday Soup. Will you stay and have some?”

“Oh, yes, thank you,” says Hen. And she sits down to wait.

Next, Duck comes in. “Happy Birthday, Little bear,” says Duck. “My, something smells good. Is it in the big black pot?”

“Thank you, Duck,” says Little Bear. “Yes, I am making Birthday Soup. Will you stay and have some with us?”

“Thank you, yes, thank you,” says Duck. And she sits down to wait.

Next, Cat comes in.

“Happy Birthday, Little Bear,” he says.

“Thank you, Cat,” says Little Bear. “I hope you like Birthday Soup. I am making Birthday Soup.

Cat says, “Can you really cook? If you can really make it, I will eat it.”

“Good,” says Little Bear. “The Birthday Soup is hot, so we must eat it now. We cannot wait for Mother Bear. I do not know where she is.”

“Now, here is some soup for you, Hen,” says Little Bear. “And here is some soup for you, Duck, and here is some soup for you, Cat, and here is some soup for me. Now we can all have some Birthday Soup.”

Cat sees Mother Bear at the door, and says, “Wait, Little Bear. Do not eat yet. Shut your eyes, and say one, two, three.”

Little Bear shuts his eyes and says, “One, two, three.”

Mother Bear comes in with a big cake.

“Now, look,” says Cat.

“Oh, Mother Bear,” says Little Bear, “what a big beautiful Birthday Cake! Birthday Soup is good to eat, but not as good as Birthday Cake. I am so happy you did not forget.”

“Yes, Happy Birthday, Little Bear!” says Mother Bear. “This Birthday Cake is a surprise for you. I never did forget your birthday, and I never will.”

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Eastman, P. D. *Are You My Mother?* New York: Random House, 1960. (1960)

A mother bird sat on her egg.

The egg jumped.

“Oh oh!” said the mother bird. “My baby will be here! He will want to eat.”

“I must get something for my baby bird to eat!” she said. “I will be back!”

So away she went.

From ARE YOU MY MOTHER? by P. D. Eastman, copyright © 1960 by P. D. Eastman. Copyright renewed 1988 by Mary L. Eastman. Used by permission of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

Seuss, Dr. *Green Eggs and Ham.* New York: Random House, 1960. (1960)

Lopshire, Robert. *Put Me in the Zoo.* New York: Random House, 1960. (1960)

I will go into the zoo.

I want to see it.

Yes, I do.

I would like to live this way.

This is where I want to stay.

Will you keep me in the zoo?

I want to stay in here with you.

From PUT ME IN THE ZOO by Robert Lopshire, copyright © 1960, renewed 1988 by Robert Lopshire. Used by permission of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. Any additional use of this text, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from Random House, Inc.

Mayer, Mercer. *A Boy, a Dog and a Frog.* New York: Dial, 2003. (1967)

This is a wordless book appropriate for kindergarten.

**Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together.* New York: HarperCollins, 1971. (1971)
From “The Garden”**

Frog was in his garden. Toad came walking by.

“What a fine garden you have, Frog,” he said.

“Yes,” said Frog. “It is very nice, but it was hard work.”

“I wish I had a garden,” said Toad.

“Here are some flower seeds. Plant them in the ground,” said Frog, “and soon you will have a garden.”

“How soon?” asked Toad.

“Quite soon,” said Frog.

Toad ran home. He planted the flower seeds.

“Now seeds,” said Toad, “start growing.”

Toad walked up and down a few times. The seeds did not start to grow. Toad put his head close to the ground and said loudly, “Now seeds, start growing!” Toad looked at the ground again. The seeds did not start to grow.

Toad put his head very close to the ground and shouted, “NOW SEEDS, START GROWING!”

Frog came running up the path. “What is all this noise?” he asked. “My seeds will not grow,” said Toad. “You are shouting too much,” said Frog. “These poor seeds are afraid to grow.”

“My seeds are afraid to grow?” asked Toad.

“Of course,” said Frog. “Leave them alone for a few days. Let the sun shine on them, let the rain fall on them. Soon your seeds will start to grow.”

That night, Toad looked out of his window. “Drat!” said Toad. “My seeds have not started to grow. They must be afraid of the dark.”

Toad went out to his garden with some candles. “I will read the seeds a story,” said Toad. “Then they will not be afraid.” Toad read a long story to his seeds.

All the next day Toad sang songs to his seeds.

And all the next day Toad read poems to his seeds.

And all the next day Toad played music for his seeds.

Toad looked at the ground. The seeds still did not start to grow. “What shall I do?” cried Toad. “These must be the most frightened seeds in the whole world!”

Then Toad felt very tired and he fell asleep.

“Toad, Toad, wake up,” said Frog. “Look at your garden!”

Toad looked at his garden. Little green plants were coming up out of the ground.

“At last,” shouted Toad, “my seeds have stopped being afraid to grow!”

“And now you will have a nice garden too,” said Frog.

“Yes,” said Toad, “but you were right, Frog. It was very hard work.”

TEXT COPYRIGHT © 1971, 1972 BY ARNOLD LOBEL. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

**Lobel, Arnold. *Owl at Home*. New York: HarperCollins, 1975. (1975)
From “Owl and the Moon”**

One night Owl went down to the seashore. He sat on a large rock and looked out at the waves. Everything was dark. Then a small tip of the moon came up over the edge of the sea.

Owl watched the moon. It climbed higher and higher into the sky. Soon the whole, round moon was shining. Owl sat on the rock and looked up at the moon for a long time. “If I am looking at you, moon, then you must be looking back at me. We must be very good friends.”

The moon did not answer, but Owl said, “I will come back and see you again, moon. But now I must go home.” Owl walked down the path. He looked up at the sky. The moon was still there. It was following him.

“No, no, moon,” said Owl. “It is kind of you to light my way. But you must stay up over the sea where you look so fine.” Owl walked on a little farther. He looked at the sky again. There was the moon coming right along with him. “Dear moon,” said Owl, “you really must not come home with me. My house is small. You would not fit through the door. And I have nothing to give you for supper.”

Owl kept on walking. The moon sailed after him over the tops of the trees. “Moon,” said Owl, “I think that you do not hear me.” Owl climbed to the top of a hill. He shouted as loudly as he could, “Good-bye, moon!”

The moon went behind some clouds. Owl looked and looked. The moon was gone. “It is always a little sad to say good-bye to a friend,” said Owl.

Owl came home. He put on his pajamas and went to bed. The room was very dark. Owl was still feeling sad. All at once, Owl's bedroom was filled with silver light. Owl looked out of the window. The moon was coming from behind the clouds. "Moon, you have followed me all the way home. What a good, round friend you are!" said Owl.

Then Owl put his head on the pillow and closed his eyes. The moon was shining down through the window. Owl did not feel sad at all.

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DePaola, Tomie. *Pancakes for Breakfast*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1978. (1978)

This is a wordless book appropriate for kindergarten.

**Arnold, Tedd. *Hi! Fly Guy*. New York: Scholastic, 2006. (2006)
From Chapter 1**

A fly went flying.
He was looking for something to eat—something tasty, something slimy.
A boy went walking
He was looking for something to catch—something smart, something for The Amazing Pet Show.
They met.
The boy caught the fly in a jar.
"A pet!" He said.
The fly was mad.
He wanted to be free.
He stomped his foot and said—Buzz!
The boy was surprised.
He said, "You know my name! You are the smartest pet in the world!"

From HI! FLY GUY by Tedd Arnold. Scholastic Inc./Cartwheel Books. Copyright © 2005 by Tedd Arnold. Used by permission.

Poetry

Anonymous. "As I Was Going to St. Ives." *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. Edited by Iona and Peter Opie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. (c1800, traditional)

As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives,
Each wife had seven sacks,
Each sack had seven cats,
Each cat had seven kits:
Kits, cats, sacks, and wives,
How many were there going to St. Ives?

Rossetti, Christina. "Mix a Pancake." *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Marc Brown. New York: Knopf, 1986. (1893)

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
Pop it in the pan;
Fry the pancake,
Toss the pancake—
Catch it if you can.

Fyleman, Rose. “Singing-Time.” *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Marc Brown. New York: Knopf, 1986. (1919)

I wake in the morning early
And always, the very first thing,
I poke out my head and I sit up in bed
And I sing and I sing and I sing.

Milne, A. A. “Halfway Down.” *When We Were Very Young*. Illustrated by Ernest H. Shepard. New York: Dutton, 1988. (1924)

Chute, Marchette. “Drinking Fountain.” *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Marc Brown. New York: Knopf, 1986. (1957)

When I climb up
To get a drink,
It doesn't work
The way you'd think.

I turn it up,
The water goes
And hits me right
Upon the nose.

I turn it down
To make it small
And don't get any
Drink at all.

From Around and About by Marchette Chute, published 1957 by E.P. Dutton. Copyright renewed by Marchette Chute, 1985. Reprinted by permission of Elizabeth Hauser.

Hughes, Langston. “Poem.” *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. New York: Knopf, 1994. (1958)

Ciardi, John. “Wouldn't You?” *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Marc Brown. New York: Knopf, 1986. (1961)

If I
Could go
As high
And low
As the wind
As the wind
As the wind
Can blow—

I'd go!

COPYRIGHT © 1962 BY JOHN CIARDI. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Wright, Richard. “Laughing Boy.” *Winter Poems*. Selected by Barbara Rogasky. Illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. New York: Scholastic, 1994. (1973) [Note: This poem was originally titled “In the Falling Snow.”]

Greenfield, Eloise. “By Myself.” *Honey, I Love, and Other Love Poems*. Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon. New York: Crowell, 1978. (1978)

Giovanni, Nikki. “Covers.” *The 20th Century Children's Poetry Treasury*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. New York: Knopf, 1999. (1980)

Glass covers windows
to keep the cold away
Clouds cover the sky
to make a rainy day

Nighttime covers
 all the things that creep
 Blankets cover me
 when I'm asleep

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Merriam, Eve. "It Fell in the City." *Read-Aloud Rhymes for the Very Young*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Marc Brown. New York: Knopf, 1986. (1985)

Lopez, Alonzo. "Celebration." *Song and Dance*. Selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins. Illustrated by Cheryl Munro Taylor. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. (1993)

I shall dance tonight.
 When the dusk comes crawling,
 There will be dancing
 and feasting.
 I shall dance with the others
 in circles,
 in leaps,
 in stomps.
 Laughter and talk
 Will weave into the night,
 Among the fires
 of my people.
 Games will be played
 And I shall be
 a part of it.

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Agee, Jon. "Two Tree Toads." *Orangutan Tongs*. New York: Hyperion, 2009. (2009)

A three-toed tree toad tried to tie
 A two-toed tree toad's shoe.
 But tying two-toed shoes is hard
 For three-toed toads to do,
 Since three-toed shoes each have three toes,
 And two-toed shoes have two.

"Please tie my two-toed tree toad shoe!"
 The two-toed tree toad cried.
 "I tried my best. Now I must go,"
 The three-toed tree toad sighed.
 The two-toed tree toad's two-toed shoe,
 Alas, remained untied.

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Read-Aloud Stories

**Baum, L. Frank. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. Illustrated by W. W. Denslow. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. (1900)
From Chapter 1: “The Cyclone”**

Dorothy lived in the midst of the great Kansas prairies, with Uncle Henry, who was a farmer, and Aunt Em, who was the farmer’s wife. Their house was small, for the lumber to build it had to be carried by wagon many miles. There were four walls, a floor and a roof, which made one room; and this room contained a rusty looking cookstove, a cupboard for the dishes, a table, three or four chairs, and the beds. Uncle Henry and Aunt Em had a big bed in one corner, and Dorothy a little bed in another corner. There was no garret at all, and no cellar—except a small hole dug in the ground, called a cyclone cellar, where the family could go in case one of those great whirlwinds arose, mighty enough to crush any building in its path. It was reached by a trap door in the middle of the floor, from which a ladder led down into the small, dark hole.

When Dorothy stood in the doorway and looked around, she could see nothing but the great gray prairie on every side. Not a tree nor a house broke the broad sweep of flat country that reached to the edge of the sky in all directions. The sun had baked the plowed land into a gray mass, with little cracks running through it. Even the grass was not green, for the sun had burned the tops of the long blades until they were the same gray color to be seen everywhere. Once the house had been painted, but the sun blistered the paint and the rains washed it away, and now the house was as dull and gray as everything else.

When Aunt Em came there to live she was a young, pretty wife. The sun and wind had changed her, too. They had taken the sparkle from her eyes and left them a sober gray; they had taken the red from her cheeks and lips, and they were gray also. She was thin and gaunt, and never smiled now. When Dorothy, who was an orphan, first came to her, Aunt Em had been so startled by the child’s laughter that she would scream and press her hand upon her heart whenever Dorothy’s merry voice reached her ears; and she still looked at the little girl with wonder that she could find anything to laugh at.

Uncle Henry never laughed. He worked hard from morning till night and did not know what joy was. He was gray also, from his long beard to his rough boots, and he looked stern and solemn, and rarely spoke.

It was Toto that made Dorothy laugh, and saved her from growing as gray as her other surroundings. Toto was not gray; he was a little black dog, with long silky hair and small black eyes that twinkled merrily on either side of his funny, wee nose. Toto played all day long, and Dorothy played with him, and loved him dearly.

Today, however, they were not playing. Uncle Henry sat upon the doorstep and looked anxiously at the sky, which was even grayer than usual. Dorothy stood in the door with Toto in her arms, and looked at the sky too. Aunt Em was washing the dishes.

**Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House in the Big Woods*. Illustrated by Garth Williams. New York: HarperCollins, 2007. (1932)
From “Two Big Bears”**

The Story of Pa and the Bear in the Way

When I went to town yesterday with the furs I found it hard walking in the soft snow. It took me a long time to get to town, and other men with furs had come in earlier to do their trading. The storekeeper was busy, and I had to wait until he could look at my furs.

Then we had to bargain about the price of each one, and then I had to pick out the things I wanted to take in trade.

So it was nearly sundown before I could start home.

I tried to hurry, but the walking was hard and I was tired, so I had not gone far before night came. And I was alone in the Big Woods without my gun.

There were still six miles to walk, and I came along as fast as I could. The night grew darker and darker, and I wished for my gun, because I knew that some of the bears had come out of their winter dens. I had seen their tracks when I went to town in the morning.

Bears are hungry and cross at this time of year; you know they have been sleeping in their dens all winter long with nothing to eat, and that makes them thin and angry when they wake up. I did not want to meet one.

I hurried along as quick as I could in the dark. By and by the stars gave a little light. It was still black as pitch where the woods were thick, but in the open places I could see, dimly. I could see the snowy road ahead a little way, and I could see the dark woods standing all around me. I was glad when I came into an open place where the stars gave me this faint light.

All the time I was watching, as well as I could, for bears. I was listening for the sounds they make when they go carelessly through the bushes.

Then I came again into an open place, and there, right in the middle of my road, I saw a big black bear.

Atwater, Richard and Florence. *Mr. Popper's Penguins*. Illustrated by Robert Lawson. New York: Little, Brown, 1988. (1938)

From Chapter 1: "Stillwater"

It was an afternoon in late September. In the pleasant little city of Stillwater, Mr. Popper, the house painter was going home from work.

He was carrying his buckets, his ladders, and his boards so that he had rather a hard time moving along. He was spattered here and there with paint and calcimine, and there were bits of wallpaper clinging to his hair and whiskers, for he was rather an untidy man.

The children looked up from their play to smile at him as he passed, and the housewives, seeing him, said, "Oh dear, there goes Mr. Popper. I must remember to ask John to have the house painted over in the spring."

No one knew what went on inside of Mr. Popper's head, and no one guessed that he would one day be the most famous person in Stillwater.

He was a dreamer. Even when he was busiest smoothing down the paste on the wallpaper, or painting the outside of other people's houses, he would forget what he was doing. Once he had painted three sides of a kitchen green, and the other side yellow. The housewife, instead of being angry and making him do it over, had liked it so well that she had made him leave it that way. And all the other housewives, when they saw it, admired it too, so that pretty soon everybody in Stillwater had two-colored kitchens.

The reason Mr. Popper was so absent-minded was that he was always dreaming about far-away countries. He had never been out of Stillwater. Not that he was unhappy. He had a nice little house of his own, a wife whom he loved dearly, and two children, named Janie and Bill. Still, it would have been nice, he often thought, if he could have seen something of the world before he met Mrs. Popper and settled down. He had never hunted tigers in India, or climbed the peaks of the Himalayas, or dived for pearls in the South Seas. Above all, he had never seen the Poles.

Jansson, Tove. *Finn Family Moomintroll*. Translated by Elizabeth Portch. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990. (1948)

From "Preface"

One grey morning the first snow began to fall in the Valley of the Moomins. It fell softly and quietly, and in a few hours everything was white.

Moomintroll stood on his doorstep and watched the valley nestle beneath its winter blanket. "Tonight," he thought, "we shall settle down for our long winter's sleep." (All Moomintrolls go to sleep about November. This is a good idea, too if you don't like the cold and the long winter darkness.) Shutting the door behind him, Moomintroll stole in to his mother and said:

"The snow has come!"

"I know," said Moominmamma. "I have already made up all your beds with the warmest blankets. You're to sleep in the little room under the eaves with Sniff."

"But Sniff snores so horribly," said Moomintroll. "Couldn't I sleep with Snufkin instead?"

"As you like, dear," said Moominmamma. "Sniff can sleep in the room that faces east."

So the Moomin family, their friends, and all their acquaintances began solemnly and with great ceremony to prepare for the long winter. Moominmamma laid the table for them on the verandah but they only had pine-needles for supper. (It's important to have your tummy full of pine if you intend to sleep all the winter.) When the meal was over, and I'm afraid it didn't taste very nice, they all said good-night to each other, rather more cheerfully than usual, and Moominmamma encouraged them to clean their teeth.

Haley, Gail E. *A Story, A Story*. New York: Atheneum, 1970. (1970)

Once, oh small children round my knee, there were no stories on earth to hear. All the stories belonged to Nyame, the

Sky God. He kept them in a golden box next to his royal stool.

Ananse, the Spider Man, wanted to buy the Sky God's stories. So he spun a web up to the sky.

When the Sky God heard what Ananse wanted, he laughed: "Twe, twe, twe. The price of my stories is that you bring me Osebo the leopard of-the-terrible-teeth, Mmboro the hornet who-stings-like-fire, and Mmoatia the fairy whom-men-never-see."

Ananse bowed and answered: "I shall gladly pay the price."

"Twe, twe, twe," chuckled the Sky God. "How can a weak old man like you, so small, so small, so small, pay my price?"

But Ananse merely climbed down to earth to find the things that the Sky God demanded.

Ananse ran along the jungle path – yiridi, yiridi, yiridi – till he came to Osebo the leopard-of-the-terrible-teeth.

"Oho, Ananse," said the leopard, "you are just in time to be my lunch."

Ananse replied: "As for that, what will happen will happen. But first let us play the binding binding game."

The leopard, who was fond of games, asked: "How is it played?"

"With vine creepers," explained Ananse. "I will bind you by your foot and foot. Then I will untie you, and you can tie me up."

"Very well," growled the leopard, who planned to eat Ananse as soon as it was his turn to bind him.

So Ananse tied the leopard

by his foot

by his foot

by his foot

by his foot, with the vine creeper.

Then he said: "Now, Osebo, you are ready to meet the Sky God." And he hung the tied leopard in a tree in the jungle.

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Bang, Molly. *The Paper Crane*. New York: Greenwillow, 1987. (1985)

A man once owned a restaurant on a busy road. He loved to cook good food and he loved to serve it. He worked from morning until night, and he was happy.

But a new highway was built close by. Travelers drove straight from one place to another and no longer stopped at the restaurant. Many days went by when no guests came at all. The man became very poor, and had nothing to do but dust and polish his empty plates and tables.

One evening a stranger came into the restaurant. His clothes were old and worn, but he had an unusual, gentle manner.

Though he said he had not money to pay for food, the owner invited him to sit down. He cooked the best meal he could make and served him like a king. When the stranger had finished, he said to his host, "I cannot pay you with money, but I would like to thank you in my own way."

He picked up a paper napkin from the table and folded it into the shape of a crane. "You have only to clap your hands," he said, "and this bird will come to life and dance for you. Take it, and enjoy it while it is with you." With these words the stranger left.

It happened just as the stranger had said. The owner had only to clap his hands and the paper crane became a living bird, flew down to the floor, and danced.

Soon word of the dancing crane spread, and people came from far and near to see the magic bird perform.

The owner was happy again, for his restaurant was always full of guests. He cooked and served and had company from morning until night.

The weeks passed. And the months.

One evening a man came into the restaurant. His clothes were old and worn, but had an unusual, gentle manner. The owner knew him at once and was overjoyed.

The stranger, however, said nothing. He took a flute from his pocket, raised it to his lips, and began to play.

The crane flew down from its place on the shelf and danced as it had never danced before.

The stranger finished playing, lowered the flute from his lips, and returned it to his pocket. He climbed on the back of the crane, and they flew out of the door and away.

The restaurant still stands by the side of the road, and guests still come to eat the good food and hear the story of the gentle stranger and the magic crane made from a paper napkin. But neither the stranger nor the dancing crane has ever been seen again.

TEXT COPYRIGHT © 1985 BY MOLLY BANG. USED WITH PERMISSION OF GREENWILLOW BOOKS.

Young, Ed. *Lon Po Po: A Red-Riding Hood Story from China*. New York: Putnam, 1989. (1989)

“Po Po,” Shang shouted, but there was no answer.

“Po Po,” Tao shouted, but there was no answer.

“Po Po,” Paotze shouted. There was still no answer. The children climbed to the branches just above the wolf and saw that he was truly dead. Then they climbed down, went into the house, closed the door, locked the door with the latch and fell peacefully asleep.

On the next day their mother returned with baskets of food from their real Po Po, and the three sisters told her the story of the Po Po who had come.

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Garza, Carmen Lomas. *Family Pictures*. San Francisco: Children’s Book Press, 1990. (1990)
From “The Fair in Reynosa”

My friends and I once went to a very big fair across the border in Reynosa, Mexico. The fair lasted a whole week. Artisans and entertainers came from all over Mexico. There were lots of booths with food and crafts. This is one little section where everybody is ordering and eating tacos.

I painted a father buying tacos and the rest of the family sitting down at the table. The little girl is the father’s favorite and that’s why she gets to tag along with him. I can always recognize little girls who are their fathers’ favorites.

From “Birthday Party”

That’s me hitting the piñata at my sixth birthday party. It was also my brother’s fourth birthday. My mother made a big birthday party for us and invited all kinds of friends, cousins and neighborhood kids.

You can’t see the piñata when you’re trying to hit it, because your eyes are covered with a handkerchief. My father is pulling the rope that makes the piñata go up and down. He will make sure that everybody has a chance to hit it at least once. Somebody will end up breaking it, and that’s when all the candies will fall out and all the kids will run and try to grab them.

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Mora, Pat. *Tomás and the Library Lady*. Illustrated by Raúl Colón. New York: Knopf, 1997. (1997)

When they got hot, they sat under a tree with Papá Grande. “Tell us the story about the man in the forest,” said Tomás.

Tomás liked to listen to Papá Grande tell stories in Spanish. Papá Grande was the best storyteller in the family.

“En un tiempo pasado,” Papá Grande began. “Once upon a time...on a windy night a man was riding a horse through a forest. The wind was howling, whooooooooo, and the leaves were blowing, wish, wish...”

“All of a sudden something grabbed the man. He couldn’t move. He was too scared to look around. All night long he wanted to ride away. But he couldn’t.

“How the wind howled, *whooooooooo*. How the leaves blew. How his teeth chattered!

“Finally the sun came up. Slowly the man turned around. And who do you think was holding him?

Tomás smiled and said, “A thorny tree.”

Papá Grande laughed. “Tomás, you know all my stories,” he said. “There are many more in the library. You are big enough to go by yourself. Then you can teach us new stories.”

The next morning Tomás walked downtown. He looked at the big library. Its tall windows were like eyes glaring at him. Tomás walked all around the big building. He saw children coming out carrying books. Slowly he started climbing up, up the steps. He counted them to himself in Spanish. *Uno, dos, tres, cuatro...*His mouth felt full of cotton.

Tomás stood in front of the library doors. He pressed his nose against the glass and peeked in. The library was huge!

From TOMÁS AND THE LIBRARY LADY by Pat Mora, copyright © 1997 by Pat Mora, illustrations copyright © 1997 by Raúl Colón. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Random House Children’s Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. Any additional use of this text, such as for classroom use or curriculum development, requires independent permission from Random House, Inc.

Henkes, Kevin. *Kitten’s First Full Moon*. New York: Greenwillow, 2004. (2004)

It was Kitten’s first full moon.
When she saw it, she thought.
There’s a little bowl of milk in the sky.
And she wanted it.

So she closed her eyes
and stretched her neck
and opened her mouth and licked.

But Kitten only ended up
with a bug on her tongue.
Poor Kitten!

Still, there was the little bowl of milk, just waiting.

So she pulled herself together
and wiggled her bottom
and sprang from the top step of the porch.

But Kitten only tumbled—
bumping her nose and banging her ear
and pinching her tail.
Poor Kitten!

Still, there was the little bowl of milk, just waiting.

So she chased it—
down the sidewalk,
 through the garden,
 past the field,
 and by the pond.
But Kitten never seemed to get closer.
Poor Kitten!

Still, there was the little bowl of milk, just waiting.

So she ran
to the tallest tree
she could find,
and she climbed
and climbed
and climbed
to the very top.

But Kitten
still couldn't reach
the bowl of milk,
and now she was
scared.
Poor Kitten!
What could she do?

Then, in the pond, Kitten saw
another bowl of milk.
And it was bigger.
What a night!

So she raced down the tree
and raced through the grass

and raced to the edge of the pond.
She leaped with all her might—

Poor Kitten!
She was wet and sad and tired
and hungry.

So she went
back home—

and there was
 a great big
 bowl of milk
 on the porch,

just waiting for her.

Lucky Kitten!
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Read-Aloud Poetry

Anonymous. "The Fox's Foray." *The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book*. Edited by Peter and Iona Opie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. (c1800, traditional)

A fox jumped out one winter's night,
And begged the moon to give him light.
For he'd many miles to trot that night
Before he reached his den O!
 Den O! Den O!
For he'd many miles to trot that night before he reached his den O!

The first place he came to was a farmer's yard,
Where the ducks and the geese declared it hard
That their nerves should be shaken and their rest so marred
By a visit from Mr. Fox O!
 Fox O! Fox O!

That their nerves should be shaken and their rest so marred
By a visit from Mr. Fox O!

He took the grey goose by the neck,
And swung him right across his back;
The grey goose cried out, Quack, quack, quack,
With his legs hanging dangling down O!

Down O! Down O!
The grey goose cried out, Quack, quack, quack,
With his legs hanging dangling down O!

Old Mother Slipper Slopper jumped out of bed,
And out of the window she popped her head:
Oh, John, John, the grey goose is gone,
And the fox is off to his den O!

Den O! Den O!
Oh, John, John, the grey goose is gone,
And the fox is off to his den O!

John ran up to the top of the hill.
And blew his whistle loud and shrill;
Said the fox, That is very pretty music still -
I'd rather be in my den O!

Den O! Den O!
Said the fox, That is very pretty music still -
I'd rather be in my den O!

The fox went back to his hungry den,
And his dear little foxes, eight, nine, ten;
Quoth they, Good daddy, you must go there again,
If you bring such good cheer from the farm O!
Farm O! Farm O!
Quoth they, Good daddy, you must go there again,
If you bring such good cheer from the farm O!

The fox and his wife, without any strife,
Said they never ate a better goose in all their life:
They did very well without fork or knife,
And the little ones chewed on the bones O!

Bones O! Bones O!
They did very well without fork or knife,
And the little ones chewed on the bones O!

Langstaff, John. *Over in the Meadow*. Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky. Orlando: Houghton Mifflin, 1973. (c1800, traditional)

Over in the meadow in a new little hive
Lived an old mother queen bee and her honeybees five.
“Hum,” said the mother,
“We hum,” said the five;
So they hummed and were glad in their new little hive.

Over in the meadow in a dam built of sticks
Lived an old mother beaver and her little beavers six.
“Build,” said the mother,
“We build,” said the six;
So they built and were glad in the dam built of sticks.

Over in the meadow in the green wet bogs
Lived an old mother froggie and her seven polliwogs.
“Swim,” said the mother.
“We swim,” said the ‘wogs;
So they swam and were glad in the green wet bogs.

Over in the meadow as the day grew late
Lived an old mother owl and her little owls eight.

“Wink,” said the mother,
 “We wink,” said the eight;
 So they winked and were glad as the day grew late.

Excerpt from OVER IN THE MEADOW by John Langstaff. Text and music copyright © 1957, and renewed 1985 by John Langstaff. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Lear, Edward. “The Owl and the Pussycat.” (1871)

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
 In a beautiful pea-green boat,
 They took some honey, and plenty of money,
 Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
 The Owl looked up to the stars above,
 And sang to a small guitar,
 ‘O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
 What a beautiful Pussy are!’

Pussy said to the Owl, ‘You elegant fowl!
 How charmingly sweet you sing!
 O let us be married! Too long we have tarried:
 But what shall we do for a ring?’
 They sailed away, for a year and a day,
 To the land where the Bong-tree grows
 And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
 With a ring at the end of his nose,
 His nose,
 His nose,
 With a ring at the end of his nose.

‘Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
 Your ring?’ Said the Piggy, ‘I will.’
 So they took it away, and were married next day
 By the turkey who lives on the hill.
 They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
 Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
 And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
 They danced by the light of the moon,
 The moon,
 The moon,
 They danced by the light of the moon.

Hughes, Langston. “April Rain Song.” *The 20th Century Children’s Poetry Treasury*. Selected by Jack Prelutsky. Illustrated by Meilo So. New York: Knopf, 1999. (1932)

Moss, Lloyd. *Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin*. Illustrated by Marjorie Priceman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. (1995)

With mournful moan and silken tone,
 Itself alone comes ONE TROMBONE.
 Gliding, sliding, high notes go low;
 ONE TROMBONE is playing SOLO.

Next a TRUMPET comes along,
 And sings and stings its swinging song.
 It joins TROMBONE, no more alone,
 And ONE and TWO-O, they’re a DUO.

The STRINGS all soar, the REEDS implore,
 The BRASSES roar with notes galore.
 It’s music that we all adore.

It's what we go to concerts for.

The minutes fly, the music ends,
And so, good-bye to our new friends.
But when they've bowed and left the floor,
If we clap loud and shout, "Encore!"
They may come out and play once more.

And that would give us great delight
Before we say a late good night.

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Sample Performance Tasks for Stories and Poetry

- Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) describe the relationship between key events of the overall story of *Little Bear* by Else Holmelund Minarik to the corresponding scenes illustrated by Maurice Sendak. [RL.K.7]
- Students *retell* Arnold Lobel's *Frog and Toad Together* while demonstrating their understanding of a central message or lesson of the story (e.g., how friends are able to solve problems together or how hard work pays off). [RL.1.2]
- Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of the owl in Arnold Lobel's *Owl at Home* to those of the owl in Edward Lear's poem "The Owl and the Pussycat." [RL.K.9]
- Students read two texts on the topic of pancakes (Tomie DePaola's *Pancakes for Breakfast* and Christina Rossetti's "Mix a Pancake") and distinguish between the text that is a *storybook* and the text that is a *poem*. [RL.K.5]
- After listening to L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, students describe the characters of Dorothy, Auntie Em, and Uncle Henry, the setting of Kansan prairie, and major events such as the arrival of the cyclone. [RL.1.3]
- Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) when listening to Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods* ask questions about the events that occur (such as the encounter with the bear) and answer by offering key details drawn from the text. [RL.1.1]
- Students identify the points at which different characters are telling the story in the *Finn Family Moomintroll* by Tove Jansson. [RL.1.6]
- Students identify words and phrases within Molly Bang's *The Paper Crane* that appeal to the senses and suggest the feelings of happiness experienced by the owner of the restaurant (e.g., clapped, played, loved, overjoyed). [RL.1.4]

Informational Texts

Bulla, Clyde Robert. *A Tree Is a Plant*. Illustrated by Stacey Schuett. New York: HarperCollins, 2001. (1960)

A tree is a plant. A tree is the biggest plant that grows. Most kinds of trees grow from seeds the way most small plants do. There are many kinds of trees. Here are a few of them. How many do you know? [illustration is labeled with Maple, Conifer, Persimmon, Palms, Lemon, Willow]

This tree grows in the country. It might grow in your yard, too. Do you know what kind it is? This is an apple tree.

This apple tree came from a seed. The seed was small. It grew inside an apple. Have you ever seen an apple seed? Ask an adult to help you cut an apple in two. The seeds are in the center. They look like this.

Most apple trees come from seeds that are planted. Sometimes an apple tree grows from a seed that falls to the ground. The wind blows leaves over the seed. The wind blows soil over the seed.

All winter the seed lies under the leaves and the soil. All winter the seed lies under the ice and snow and is pushed into the ground. Spring comes. Rain falls. The sun comes out and warms the earth. The seed begins to grow.

At first the young plant does not look like a tree. The tree is very small. It is only a stem with two leaves. It has no apples on it. A tree must grow up before it has apples on it. Each year the tree grows. It grows tall. In seven years it is so tall that you can stand under its branches. In the spring there are blossoms on the tree. Spring is apple-blossom time.

[...]

We cannot see the roots. They are under the ground. Some of the roots are large. Some of them are as small as hairs. The roots grow like branches under the ground. A tree could not live without roots.

Roots hold the trunk in the ground. Roots keep the tree from falling when the wind blows. Roots keep the rain from washing the tree out of the ground.

Roots do something more. They take water from the ground. They carry the water into the trunk of the tree. The trunk carries the water to the branches. The branches carry the water to the leaves.

Hundreds and hundreds of leaves grow on the branches. The leaves make food from water and air. They make food when the sun shines. The food goes into the branches. It goes into the trunk and roots. It goes to every part of the tree.

Fall comes and winter is near. The work of the leaves is over. The leaves turn yellow and brown. The leaves die and fall to the ground.

Now the tree is bare. All winter it looks dead. But the tree is not dead. Under its coat of bark, the tree is alive.

TEXT COPYRIGHT © 1981 BY CLYDE ROBERT BULLA. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Aliki. *My Five Senses*. New York: HarperCollins, 1989. (1962)

I can see! I see with my eyes.

I can hear! I hear with my ears.

I can smell! I smell with my nose.

I can taste! I taste with my tongue.

I can touch! I touch with my fingers.

I do all this with my senses.

I have five senses.

When I see the sun or a frog or my baby sister, I use my sense of sight. I am seeing.

When I hear a drum or a fire engine or a bird, I use my sense of hearing. I am hearing.

When I smell soap or a pine tree or cookies just out of the oven, I use my sense of smell. I am smelling.

When I drink my milk and eat my food, I use my sense of taste. I am tasting.

When I touch a kitten or a balloon or water, I use my sense of touch. I am touching.

Sometimes I use all my senses at once.

Sometimes I use only one.

I often play a game with myself.

I guess how many senses I am using at that time.

When I look at the moon and the stars, I use one sense. I am seeing.

When I laugh and play with my puppy, I use four senses. I see, hear, smell, and touch.

When I bounce a ball, I use three senses. I see, hear, touch.

Sometimes I use more of one sense and less of another.

But each sense is very important to me, because it makes me aware.

To be aware is to see all there is to see...

hear all there is to hear...

smell all there is to smell...

taste all there is to taste...

touch all there is to touch.

Wherever I go, whatever I do, every minute of the day, my senses are working.

They make me aware.

COPYRIGHT © 1962, 1989 BY ALIKI BRANDENBERG. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Hurd, Edith Thacher. *Starfish*. Illustrated by Robin Brickman. New York: HarperCollins, 2000. (1962)

Starfish live in the sea. Starfish live deep down in the sea. Starfish live in pools by the sea.

Some starfish are purple. Some starfish are pink.

This is the sunflower starfish. It is the biggest of all. Starfish have many arms. The arms are called rays. Starfish have arms, but no legs.

Starfish have feet, but no toes. They glide and slide on tiny tube feet. They move as slowly as a snail.

The basket star looks like a starfish, but it is a little different. It doesn't have tube feet. It moves with its rays. It has rays that go up and rays that go down.

Tiny brittle stars are like the basket star. They hide under rocks in pools by the sea.

The mud star hides in the mud. It is a starfish. It has tiny tube feet.

A starfish has no eyes. A starfish has no ears or nose. Its tiny mouth is on its underside. When a starfish is hungry, it slides and it glides on its tiny tube feet.

It hunts for mussels and oysters and clams. It feels for the mussels, it feels for the oysters. It feels for the clams. It feels for something to eat.

The starfish crawls over a clam. Its rays go over it. Its rays go under it. Its rays go all over the clam. The starfish pulls and pulls. It pulls the shells open. It eats the clam inside.

Sometimes a starfish loses a ray. A crab may pull it off. A rock may fall on it. But this does not hurt. It does not bother the starfish. The starfish just grows another ray.

In the spring when the sun shines warm, and the sea grows warm, starfish lay eggs. Starfish lay eggs in the water. They lay many, many, many tiny eggs. The eggs look like sand in the sea. The tiny eggs float in the water. They float up and down. They move with the waves and the tide, up and down, up and down.

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Aliki. *A Weed is a Flower: The Life of George Washington Carver*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1965. (1965)

Crews, Donald. *Truck*. New York: HarperCollins, 1980. (1980)

This is a largely wordless book appropriate for kindergarten.

Hoban, Tana. *I Read Signs*. New York: HarperCollins, 1987 (1987)

This is a largely wordless book appropriate for kindergarten.

Reid, Mary Ebeltoft. *Let's Find Out About Ice Cream*. Photographs by John Williams. New York: Scholastic, 1996. (1996)

“Garden Helpers.” *National Geographic Young Explorers* September 2009. (2009)

Not all bugs and worms are pests.
Some help your garden grow.

Earthworms make soil rich and healthy.
This helps plants grow strong!

A ladybug eats small bugs.
The bugs can't eat the plants.
This keeps your garden safe.

A praying mantis eats any bug it can catch.
Not many bugs can get past this quick hunter!

This spider catches bugs in its sticky web.
It keeps bugs away from your garden.

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“Wind Power.” *National Geographic Young Explorers* November/December 2009. (2009)

Wind is air on the move.
See what wind can do.

Wind can whip up some fun!

Wind starts with the sun.
The sun warms land and water.
The air above warms up too.

Warm air rises.
Cooler air rushes in.
That moving air is wind.

Wind is energy.
It can push a sailboat.

Look at the windmills spin!
They turn wind energy into electricity.
What else can wind do?

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Read-Aloud Informational Texts

Provensen, Alice and Martin. *The Year at Maple Hill Farm*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001. (1978)

**Gibbons, Gail. *Fire! Fire!* New York: HarperCollins, 1987. (1984)
From “Fire! Fire! In the city...”**

In an apartment house, a breeze has blown a towel up into the flame of a hot stove. A fire begins. The smoke alarm screams.

A phone call alerts the fire-dispatch center. Instantly, a dispatcher calls the firehouse nearest the fire.

A loudspeaker blares out the address of the fire, and the firefighters go into action. They slide down brass poles to the ground floor, where the fire engines are, and hurry into their fire-fighting gear. Then they take their positions on their engines.

The big trucks roar out of the firehouse. Sirens scream and lights flash.

The fire engines arrive at the scene. The fire is bigger now. The fire chief is in charge. He decides the best way to fight this fire.

Hoses are pulled from the trucks. Each separate fire truck is called a “company.” Each separate company has an officer in charge. The fire chief tells each officer in charge what he wants the firefighters to do.

Firefighters are ordered to search the building to make sure no one is still inside. A man is trapped. A ladder tower is swung into action. The man is rescued quickly.

At the same time, an aerial ladder is taking other firefighters to the floor above the fire. Inside, the firefighters attach a hose to the building’s standpipe. Water is sprayed onto the fire to keep it from moving up through the apartment house.

Now the aerial ladder is swung over to the roof of the burning building. Firefighters break holes in the roof and windows to let out poisonous gases, heat, and smoke before they can cause a bad explosion. There’s less danger now for the firefighters working inside the building.

Firefighters are battling the blaze from the outside of the building, too. Fire hoses carry water from the fire hydrants to the trucks.

Pumps in the fire trucks control the water pressure and push the water up through the discharge hoses. Streams of water hit the burning building and buildings next door to keep the fire from spreading.

The fire is under control.

The fire is out. The firefighters clean up the rubble. Back at the firehouse, they clean their equipment and make an official report on the fire.

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Dorros, Arthur. *Follow the Water from Brook to Ocean*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. (1991)

After the next big rain storm, put your boots on and go outside. Look at the water dripping from your roof. Watch it gush out of the drainpipes. You can see water flowing down your street too.

Water is always flowing. It trickles in the brook near your house.

Sometimes you see water rushing along in a stream or in a big river.

Water always flows downhill. It flows from high places to low places, just the way you and your skateboard move down a hill.

Sometimes water collects in a low spot in the land – a puddle, a pond, or a lake. The water’s downhill journey may end there. Most of the time, though, the water will find a way to keep flowing downhill. Because water flows downhill, it will keep flowing until it can’t go any lower. The lowest parts of the earth are the oceans. Water will keep flowing until it reaches an ocean.

Where does the water start? Where does the water in a brook or a stream or a river come from? The water comes from rain. And it comes from melting snow. The water from rain and melting snow runs over the ground. Some of it soaks into the ground, and some water is soaked up by trees and other plants. But a lot of the water keeps traveling over the ground, flowing downhill.

The water runs along, flowing over the ground. Trickles of water flow together to form a brook. A brook isn’t very deep or wide. You could easily step across a brook to get to the other side.

The brook flows over small stones covered with algae. Algae are tiny plants. They can be green, red, or brown. Green algae make the water look green. Plop! A frog jumps into the brook. A salamander wiggles through leafy

water plants. Slap! A trout's tail hits the water. Lots of creatures live in the moving water.

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Rauzon, Mark, and Cynthia Overbeck Bix. *Water, Water Everywhere*. San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1994. (1994)

Llewellyn, Claire. *Earthworms*. New York: Franklin Watts, 2002. (2002)

Jenkins, Steve, and Robin Page. *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* Orlando: Houghton Mifflin, 2003. (2003)

What do you do with a nose like this?

If you're a platypus, you use your nose to dig in the mud.

If you're a hyena, you find your next meal with your nose.

If you're an elephant, you use your nose to give yourself a bath.

If you're a mole, you use your nose to find your way underground.

If you're an alligator, you breathe through your nose while hiding in the water.

What do you do with ears like these?

If you're a jackrabbit, you use your ears to keep cool.

If you're a bat you "see" with your ears.

If you're a cricket, you hear with ears that are on your knees.

If you're a humpback whale, you hear sounds hundreds of miles away.

If you're a hippopotamus, you close your ears when you're under water.

What do you do with a tail like this?

If you're a giraffe, you brush off pesky flies with your tail.

If you're a skunk, you lift your tail to warn that a stinky spray is on the way.

If you're a lizard, you break off your tail to get away.

If you're a scorpion, your tail can give a nasty sting.

If you're a monkey, you hang from a tree by your tail.

What do you do with eyes like these?

If you're an eagle, you spot tiny animals from high in the air.

If you're a chameleon, you look two ways at once.

If you're a four-eye fish, you look above and below the water at the same time.

If you're a bush baby, you use your large eyes to see clearly at night.

If you're a horned lizard, you squirt blood out of your eyes.

What do you do with feet like these?

If you're a chimpanzee, you feed yourself with your feet.

If you're a water strider, you walk on water.

If you're a blue-footed booby, you do a dance.

If you're a gecko, you use your sticky feet to walk on the ceiling.

If you're a mountain goat, you leap from ledge to ledge.

What do you do with a mouth like this?

If you're a pelican, you use your mouth as a net to scoop up fish.

If you're an egg-eating snake, you use your mouth to swallow eggs larger than your head.

If you're a mosquito, you use your mouth to suck blood.

If you're an anteater, you capture termites with your long tongue.

If you're an archerfish, you catch insects by shooting them down with a stream of water.

Excerpted from WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A TAIL LIKE THIS? By Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. Copyright © 2003 by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page. Used by Permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Pfeffer, Wendy. *From Seed to Pumpkin*. Illustrated by James Graham Hale. New York: HarperCollins, 2004. (2004)

When spring winds warm the earth, a farmer plants hundreds of pumpkin seeds.

Every pumpkin seed can become a baby pumpkin plant. Underground, covered with dark, moist soil, the baby plants begin to grow.

As the plants get bigger, the seeds crack open. Stems sprout up. Roots dig down. Inside the roots are tubes. Water travels up these tubes the way juice goes up a straw.

In less than two weeks from planting time, green shoots poke up through the earth.

These shoots grow into tiny seedlings. Two leaves, called seed leaves, uncurl on each stem. They reach up toward the sun.

Sunlight gives these leaves energy to make food. Like us, plants need food to grow. But green plants do not eat food as we do. Their leaves make it.

To make food, plants need light, water, and air. Leaves catch the sunlight. Roots soak up rainwater. And little openings in the leaves let air in. Using energy from the sun, the leaves mix the air with water from the soil to make sugar. This feeds the plant.

Soon broad, prickly leaves with jagged edges unfold on the stems.

The seed leaves dry up. Now the new leaves make food for the pumpkin plant.

Each pumpkin stem has many sets of tubes. One tube in each set takes water from the soil up to the leaves so they can make sugar. The other tube in each set sends food back down so the pumpkin can grow.

The days grow warmer. The farmer tends the pumpkin patch to keep weeds out. Weeds take water from the soil. Pumpkin plants need that water to grow.

Text copyright © 2004 by Wendy Pfeffer. Used by permission of HarperCollins Publishers.

Thomson, Sarah L. *Amazing Whales!* New York: HarperCollins, 2006. (2005)

A blue whale is as long as a basketball court. Its eyes are as big as softballs. Its tongue weighs as much as an elephant.

It is the biggest animal that has ever lived on Earth – bigger than any dinosaur.

But not all whales are this big. A killer whale is about as long as a fire truck. Dolphins and porpoises are whales too, very small whales. The smallest dolphin is only five feet long. That's probably shorter than your mom.

There are about 80 kinds of whales. All of them are mammals. Dogs and monkeys and people are mammals, too. They are warm-blooded. This means that their blood stays at the same temperature even if the air or water around them gets hot or cold.

Mammal babies drink milk from their mothers. Whale babies are called calves.

And mammals breathe air. A whale must swim to the ocean's surface to breathe or it will drown. After a whale calf is born, its mother may lift it up for its first breath of air.

A whale uses its blowholes to breathe. It can have one blowhole or two. The blowholes are on the top of its head. When a whale breathes out, the warm breath makes a cloud called a blow. Then the whale breathes in. Its blowholes squeeze shut. The whale dives under the water. It holds its breath until it comes back up.

When sperm whales hunt, they dive deeper than any other whale. They can hold their breath for longer than an hour and dive down more than a mile.

Deep in the ocean, where the water is dark and cold, sperm whales hunt for giant squid and other animals.

Some whales, like sperm whales, have teeth to catch their food. They are called toothed whales. Other whales have no teeth. They are called baleen whales. (Say it like this: bay-LEEN.) Blue whales and humpback whales are baleen whales. They have strips of baleen in their mouths. Baleen is made of the same stuff as your fingernails. It is strong but it can bend.

A baleen whale fills its mouth with water. In the water there might be fish or krill. Krill are tiny animals like shrimp. The whale closes its mouth. The water flows back out between the strips of baleen.

The fish or krill are trapped inside its mouth for the whale to eat.

Some whales, like killer whales, hunt in groups to catch their food. These groups are called pods. A whale mother and her children, and even her grandchildren sometimes live in one pod.

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Hodgkins, Fran, and True Kelley. *How People Learned to Fly*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007. (2007)

When you see a bird flying, do you dream about flying too?

Do you run with your arms out, imagining that you're soaring among the clouds? Do you make paper airplanes? Do you fly kites?

If you do, you aren't alone. For thousands of years, people have dreamed of being able to fly.

They watched birds and bats soar.

They imagined people and other animals that could fly and told stories about them.

They designed machines that they thought would be able to fly.

They had many ideas. As they tried each new idea, they learned a lot.

They learned about gravity. Gravity is the force that keeps everything on the Earth's surface. Because of gravity, things have weight.

If there were no gravity, people, dogs, cats, and everything else would go floating off into space. Gravity keeps us on the ground, even if we would rather be flying.

People also learned about air. Air is made of tiny particles called molecules. When you walk or run, you push through air molecules. They push back on you, too, even though you don't really feel the push unless the wind blows.

People learned that wind could push a kite into the sky.

When air molecules push back on a moving object, that is a force called drag. You can feel drag for yourself. Hold out your arms. Now spin around. Feel the push of air on your arms and hands? That's drag. Like gravity, drag works against objects that are trying to fly.

Kites were useful and fun, but people wanted more. They wanted to fly like birds.

Birds had something that kites didn't: Birds had wings.

People made wings and strapped them to their arms. They flapped their arms but couldn't fly.

They built gliders, light aircraft with wings. Some didn't work, but some did.

The gliders that worked best had special wings. These wings were arched on both the top and the bottom. The air pulled the wings from above and pushed the wings from below. When the wings went up, so did the glider! Arched wings help create a force called lift. Lift is the force that keeps birds and gliders in the air.

Most gliders have long, thin wings. The wings create enough lift to carry the aircraft and its passengers. Gliders usually ride currents of air the same way a hawk soars.

Gliders are very light, and long wings and air currents can give them enough lift to fly. But to carry more than just a passenger or two, an aircraft needs a lot more lift. The question is: How do you create more lift?

The engine is the answer!

The engine is a machine that changes energy into movement. The forward movement that an airplane needs to fly is called thrust. More thrust makes an airplane move forward faster. Moving faster creates more lift. And with more lift, an airplane can carry more weight. So an aircraft with an engine can carry passengers or cargo.

In 1903 the Wright brothers figured out how to get wings and an engine to work together in order to give an airplane enough thrust to fly. They made the first powered flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

Since then, people have made airplanes that can fly faster than sound can travel. They have made airplanes that can fly all the way around the world without stopping.

Today, thousands of people travel in airplanes every day. People really have learned how to fly!

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Nivola, Claire A. Planting the trees of Kenya: the story of Wangari Maathai. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008. (2008)

Sample Performance Tasks for Informational Texts

- Students *identify* the reasons Clyde Robert Bulla gives in his book *A Tree Is a Plant* in support of his point about the function of roots in germination. [RI.1.8]
- Students identify Edith Thacher Hurd as the *author* of *Starfish* and Robin Brickman as the *illustrator* of the text and *define* the role and materials *each* contributes to the *text*. [RI.K.6]
- Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) read “Garden Helpers” in *National Geographic Young Explorers* and demonstrate their understanding of *the main idea of the text*—not all bugs are bad—by *retelling key details*. [RI.K.2]
- After listening to Gail Gibbons’ *Fire! Fire!*, students *ask questions about* how firefighters respond to a fire and *answer* using *key details* from the *text*. [RI.1.1]
- Students *locate key facts or information* in Claire Llewellyn’s *Earthworms* by *using various text features* (*headings, table of contents, glossary*) found in the *text*. [RI.1.5]
- Students *ask and answer questions about* animals (e.g., hyena, alligator, platypus, scorpion) they encounter in Steve Jenkins and Robin Page’s *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?* [RI.K.4]
- Students use the *illustrations* along with *textual details* in Wendy Pfeffer’s *From Seed to Pumpkin* to *describe the key idea* of how a pumpkin grows. [RI.1.7]
- Students (*with prompting and support from the teacher*) *describe the connection between* drag and flying in Fran Hodgkins and True Kelley’s *How People Learned to Fly* by performing the “arm spinning” experiment described in the *text*. [RI.K.3]